A Brief APOLOGY IN Behalf of the PEOPLE In Derision Call'd QUAKERS.

WRITTEN

For the Information of our Sober and Well-inclined Neighbours in and about the Town of *Warminster* in the County of *Wilts.*

BY

Wil. Chandler, Alex. Parr, Jo. Hodges, And some others.

By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report, as deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold we live, 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9.

LONDON:

Printed for *Thomas Northcott* in *George-Yard* in *Lumbard-Street*, and are to be Sold by *William Longford*, Bookseller in *Warminster*, 1694.

A BRIEF APOLOGY

IN

Behalf of the People

called

QUAKERS.

WRITTEN

For the Information of our Soberly and well inclined Neighbours in and about the Town of Warmister in the County of Wilts.



By Humour and Affection, by evil report and good report, by deceivers and yet true, as unknown and yet well known, as dying and behold we live. 2 Cor. 6. 8, 9.

LONDON:

Printed for Thomas Northcott in Grace-Church-Street, and are to be Sold by William Loyd, Bookseller in Warmister, 1699.

A Brief Apology, &c.

IT is not that we love Contention, or desire Controversie, or are impatient in bearing Reproaches, that we appear thus publick; but such have been the repeated high Charges, and smart Lashes that our Adversaries (more especially, some of the *Presbyterian* Assembly,) have of late taken a liberty, liberally and lavishly to bestow upon us; that we find our selves concern'd, to Clear and Vindicate the Truth and Innocency of our Christian Profession from those black Aspersions, that have rendred it so frightful and formidable, as though 'twere only a meer complication of pestilent Errors, as well as to satisfie the Minds of such of our piously inclined Neighbours, as may be desirous to hear us speak for our selves, as also for the information of those who may have been imposed upon, by that dress wherein our Opposers have represented us. And al-

though these can Object nothing material against us now that hath not been long since over and over offer'd by some of the same Perswasion, and have as often received Answers from some or other of our Friends; (some of which have never yet been by them replyed unto) yet forasmuch as those may not have come to the view of many of our Neighbours, for whom this is chiefly intended, we thought it fit briefly to say so much as we think may be accommodate to the present occasion; and which perhaps with unprejudic'd Minds may
Esth. 3. 5. bespeak our Creed not so unsound and erroneous, as our somewhat different deportment hath rendred us obnoxious and contemptible, as well as distasteful
Joh. 5. 44. to those who either ambitiously affect
Mat. 23. 10. honour and respect, and love greetings, or think a complaisant complyance to the Fashions, customs, and complements of the Age, to be one of the chiefest felicities of this Life, and best expression of their Civility and good Manners.

We therefore desire our well-disposed Neighbours, candidly to weigh what we have to alledge against the Clamours of those, who to be sure will not set us out to our best advantage, and to

receive

receive an Account from our selves, what we are, and what we believe and hold for Christian Truths; who certainly must needs know better our own Belief, than those who perhaps never examined it, to any other end than to find fault, if ever they did it; and also that you will not think it strange, that we express not our Belief in some particulars, in the affected Terms of other Professors of Christianity, but think it more reasonable and safe to content our selves with that Dress of Language, in which the Holy Ghost thought fit to hand them to us in the Holy Scriptures. Those most Excellent and Divine Writings, which above all others in the World, challenge our Reverence and most diligent Reading, those Oracles of God, and rich Christian Treasury of Divine saving Truths, which were written for our Learning, that we through patience and comfort of them may have hope, and are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, to the perfecting and thoroughly furnishing of the Man of GOD to every good Work, making him wise unto Salvation thro' Faith which is in Christ Jesus; containing all Christian Doctrins necessary

Rom. 15. 4.

2 Tim. c. 3. v. 15, 16, 17.

to be believed for Salvation, and are a sufficient external ſtandard and touch-ſtone to try the Doctrins of Men; and
Gal. 1.8. we ſay with the Apoſtle, whoſoever ſhall publiſh, and propagate any other Goſpel and Faith than is therein teſtified of to us, by thoſe inſpired Pen-men who were the firſt Promulgators thereof, though he were an Angel let him be accurſed; all which, and whatſoever is therein contained, we as firmly believe as any of you do; and as 'tis the duty of every ſincere Chriſtian, we are heartily thankful to God for them, who through his good Providence hath preſerved them to our Time, to our great benefit and comfort.

We Believe in that Great Omnipotent God, that made and created all things, and gave us our Being, whom in ſincerity of heart we fear, reverence and worſhip, being ſeriouſly concern'd for our ſouls welfare to eternity. We believe that Great Myſtery, that there
1 Joh. 5. 7. are Three that bear Record in Heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, and that theſe Three are One in Being and Subſtance: And as do ye, ſo do we alſo hope for and expect Salvation, only and alone through the Son of God our bleſſed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST

CHRIST of *Nazareth*; believing that God the Father hath ordained him for Salvation to the ends of the Earth; and that no other Name is given under Heaven, by which Men shall be saved; who being conceived by the Holy Ghost, in the Womb of the Virgin *Mary*, was born of her at *Bethlehem*; as also his Holy and Exemplary Life, perfectly free from sin; his Doctrin, Miracles, Sufferings, and Death upon the Cross, without the Gates of *Jerusalem*; his Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension into Heaven, where he is at the Right Hand of God the Father, perfect GOD and perfect Man, and the alone Mediator between GOD and Man, and is our Advocate with the Father, and ever liveth to make Intercession for us; and also shall judge both Quick and Dead: All which, and whatsoever else is recorded of him in the Sacred Scriptures, we firmly believe.

Isa. 49. 6. Act. 13. 47. & 4. 12.

1 Pet. 2. 21, 22. Heb. 4. 15.

Ro. 8. 34. 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. 1 Jo. 2. 12.

Act. 10. 42.

This Jesus, in whom dwelt the fulness of the God-head, we believe offer'd up himself according to the Will of the Father, an acceptable Sacrifice to God, and became a Propitiation for the sins of Mankind, *to the end of the World*, and died for all Men, as all died in *Adam*; through whose Blood God pro-

Col. 2. 9.

Eph. 5. 2. 1 Joh. 2. 2. Heb. 10. 12.

Rom. 5. v. 12. 18.

claiming Redemption and Salvation to
2 Cor. 5. 19. & Rom. 5. 15. Man, and offers to be reconciled, and freely for his Sons sake to remit, forgive and pass by all past Offences to as many as shall truly and heartily repent of their
Luk. 24. 47. Acts 10. 43. & 26. 20. Eph. 4. 22. 23, 24. Ro. 8. 3, 4. 2. Cor. 5. 15. 17. Tit. 2. 12. Joh. 14. 15, 21, 23. 24. & 15. 10. 2 Tim. 2. 19. 1 Pet. 4. 1, 2, 3. Jam. 2. 12. to the end. Sins, and turn from the same, and shall so believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and love him as for the future to live a holy Circumspect Christian Life, and obey his Commands, thereby continuing in his love.

Which Holy Life so much Celebrated and strictly kept to in the Primitive Ages of Christianity, (that whosoever named the Name, or took the Name of Christ upon them, were to depart from Iniquity,) we believe ought to be inseparable from a true and faithful Christian, as ever accompanying a true living and active Faith; and it seems was thought no less necessary, by those who composed the promise, that should be made in behalf of Infants, before they were admitted into that once sacred Catalogue, (to wit) that as they
Tit. 2. 11, 12. came to Years of discretion, they should forsake the Devil and all his Works, the Pomps and Vanities of this wicked
Luk. 1. 75. World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and keep Gods holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all

the

days of their lives? This we be- Ro. 6. 18,
lieve to be the bounden Duty of Man 19. 22.
kind, and though our Oppolers have 2 Cor. 7.1.
cost us, and branded us with error Eph. 4.24.
for holding Perfection, because (in plead- 1 Thes. 3.
ing for a Holy Righteous Life, as that 13. & 4.7.
which is well-pleasing to God, and a- Heb. 12.
vouching his power to be stronger in 10. 14.
Man, as Man believes and cleaves to it, 1 Joh. 4.4.
to rescue him from under the power of
Satan, than is, that of the Devil to re-
tain him in Thraldom,) we have some-
times made use of the Words of Christ
and his Apostles, as be you perfect, as Mat. 5.48.
your Father which is in Heaven is per- Col. 4. 12.
fect; he that hath this Hope in him, pu- 1 Joh. 3. 3.
rifieth himself even as he pure; &c.
Yet have we never pretended to a Mo-
ral Perfection beyond what is contain-
ed in the above Promise, which is sound
and true in it self, and is that which
God requires of us; and therefore 'tis
that we frequently press it's necessity,
and fervently exhort People to its per-
formance. Neither do we expect to be
exempt from Temptations, while we
inhabit these frail Tabernacles, which Heb. 4.15.
is no Sin, provided we consent not.
Christ himself was likewise tempted,
yet he Sinn'd not; for tho both Good and
Evil is presented to our Thoughts, yet

we

we appropriate neither, but as we entertain and embrace it: So that the the number of Thoughts may sometimes press us, and the nature of some grieve us; yet they don't otherwise affect us, or is Sin thereby conceived, if our Wills don't close with, and joyn to them by assenting; but if we consent, we are culpable in the sight of God, tho it proceed not to an open immorality. And as we can't prevent the forming of some Thoughts, so we can't wholly avoid the presentation of some Evil ones, while our common Enemy is busie with his Baites; but yet the more we resist, and the more the Lusts and Affections of the Flesh (which is the part that entertains them) is mortified, the more their Habit is weakned, their Assaults Feebler, and we the less infested by them.

And notwithstanding we have hence been falsely accused, that we expect to be saved by our own works as being Meritorious, yet we don't acknowledge a Holy Life as the Efficient and procuring Cause of our Salvation; which we no less than you totally refer to the free Grace, and Mercy of God in Christ, without any Merit in Man; but we esteem it as a constant

Eph. 2. 8.

Com-

Companion thereto, and a neceſſary condition on our part, in complyance with God's gracious Offer, without which we may not obtain it, being inſeparably annext to that Faith, which only pleaſeth God, and is but our reaſonable Duty. James 2. 18. to the end. Heb. 11.6. Ro. 12. 1, 2.

And we believe that although Chriſt thus offer'd up himſelf once for all, for the Sins of all Men to the end of the World; thereby rendring Repentance and Amendment of Life prevalent with God; yet that the Traditional Belief of that alone is not ſufficient to entitle us to that common Salvation that comes by him; but that 'tis of neceſſity that we truly Repent and be Converted from the evil to the good; and therefore 'tis no leſs neceſſary for us now than 'twas for Believers in the Apoſtles Days, that we be turned from Darkneſs to Light, or in other terms, from the dark power of Satan, to the power of God who is light, that thereby we may every one know the work of Redemption and Salvation, wrought in and for our ſelves: For 'tis not enough to believe that Chriſt died, if we feel not the bleſſed Effects of his Death, who came to ſave us from our Sins, aud bleſs us by turning us from our Iniquities, and gave himſelf Heb. 2. 9. & 10. 12. Act. 3. 19. and 26. 18. 20. Mat. 1. 21. Act. 3. 26.

Tit. 2. 14. himself for us; that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works.

Gen. 2. 17. Ro. 5. 12. 2 Cor. 5. 14. Gen. 6. 5. Ro. 7. 5. Eph. 2. 2. 2 Tim. 2. 26. 1 Cor. 2. 14. 1 Cor. 15. 45. 47. Eph. 2. 1. 5. Col. 2. 13. Ro. 8. 11. Eph. 5. 13. 14. Joh. 1. 9. Eph. 2. 3. & 5. 6.

For we believe such to be the natural State of Man in the fall, that by Nature we are dead as to God, at a distance from him, prone to Evil, and to gratify the Desires of our Sensual Minds, sway'd by the corrupt and sinful Lusts of the Flesh, and under the power of a strange King, rul'd by the Prince of the Power of the Air; so that our inward Man being thus Dead from God, we cannot exercise our Spiritual Senses towards him, nor can this natural Man perceive, know, or savour the things of God, which only are Spiritually discerned: Wherefore, notwithstanding our Saviour died for us, we are yet by Nature in a miserable undone condition, in Captivity to our Souls Enemy, except we know the Second *Adam* the Lord from Heaven, that quickning Spirit, to quicken our Souls, and make us alive to God again, that being restored to the use of our inward Senses, we may by the assistance of his Divine Light (wherewith for that end he hath blest all the Sons and Daughters of Men) see our selves in this

his ſad and loſt ſtate under the wrath of God, and abhor our ſelves therefore, and under this living Senſe (wherein things will appear with another aſpect than before,) cry to God for deliverance therefrom, with ſuch an inward earty Sorrow, as works a true Repentance for the ſame. 2 Cor. 7. 10.

'Tis not our being ſprinkled, when Infants, that will make us true Chriſtians, convert us from being Children of Wrath, to become Children of Grace, and Sons of God, and Members of Chriſts Church, and inveſt us in an Intereſt in him; 'tis not learning our Catechiſm, and ſubſcribing to certain Articles of Faith, though never ſo Orthodox, and being educated in a Hiſtorical Belief of what Chriſt did for us above Sixteen Hundred Years ago; 'tis not this only that will adminiſter a ſufficient, true, and ſaving knowledge of Chriſt, and really intereſt us in his Death and Sufferings; all which People may talk of, and pleaſe themſelves withal, and yet continue as faſt bound under the Dominion of Satan (who ſtill rules where diſobedience is) as thoſe leſs perfect in that Leſſon: But the true and ſaving Knowledge of Chriſt, is to know our ſelves turn'd from Darkneſs to Light, from Joh. 1. 12. 13. Ro. 8. 14. The Sav. ledge. Act. 26. 18

the

Col. 1.13. the power of Satan to the power of God, that by it we may be delivered from the power of Darkneſs, and be tranſlated into the Kingdom of his dear Son; to know his ſaving power really to reſcue and redeem us from under the power of him that hath enthrall'd us, and leads Captive at his Will thoſe who lives in the vanity of their Minds; to know him bind this ſtrong Man, to ſpoil his Goods, and diſpoſſeſs and caſt him out; to know Chriſt to ſit in the Soul as a Refiner, to burn up, conſume and deſtroy, to purify and throughly to purge out whatſoever is contrary to him, to waſh us, and make us clean, that we may have right to a part in him, that being cleanſed and ſanctified, he may take up his abode with us, exerciſing his Kingly power, and working in us both to will and to do of his good pleaſure. The Mind being thus diſentangled, and having caſt off its former Yoke, the old things being done away, all things now become new; a new tender Heart of Fleſh according to the Promiſe, new Thoughts, Deſires, Inclinations, Affections, Words, and Actions; this new inſide producing a new outſide alſo, even throughout, a new Creature; now in Chriſt indeed, and really

Joh. 8.32. 36.
Mar. 3. 27.
Mal. 3. 2, 3.
Luk. 3. 16, 17.
Ro. 15. 16.
Joh. 13. 8.
1 Theſ. 5. 23.
1 Cor. 1. 2.
Joh. 14. 23.
Heb. 13. 21.
2 Cor. 5. 17.
Ezek. 36. 26.
Mat. 23. 26.

ally entituled to those Benefits that
crue to Men through him. That li-
ing Faith that pleaseth God, and gives Jam. 2. 18.
victory, and is ever fruitful to him in to the end.
ood Works, being begotten, and this
ork of Redemption and Regeneration Heb. 12. 2.
hus wrought in the Soul by Jesus
Christ, together with that most pre-
ious Sacrifice he offer'd up, when his
recious Blood was shed upon the Cross
or us, we believe compleats the Salva-
ion of every Soul that is thus awa-
kened, and made alive, and set free, Ro. 6. 11.
y the power and Spirit of him that 13.
s the Way, the Truth, and the Life Joh. 8. 36.
of every Soul that truly lives to God,
o walk in that Holy way of Life,
Truth and Peace, that was prepared Isa. 35. 8,
of old for the Ransomed and Redeemed 9.
to walk in.

And we believe that he graciously
waits with exceeding great kindness,
and long suffering, that Men may Re-
pent, knocking at the Door of every Rev. 3. 20.
Man's Heart, freely offering, but not
imposing his Assistance to this most Mat. 23.
concerning work and change in the 37.
Minds of Men; so that in the day
wherein God will judge the World by
Jesus Christ, and every secret thing
will be made manifest, God will be
justified

justified and clear of the Blood of Men; and every Mouth will be stopped, and every Man's Condemnation will be of himself; for having rejected the Day of his Visitation, (wherein God calls to Man,) and offers to be reconciled to him; for resisting all strivings, and slighting the Reproofs Neh. 9.20. of his Spirit, which in matchless Mercy he hath given Man to instruct him, and shew, and lead him in the way of Life and Peace.

We believe, that though the pravity of Man's Nature in the Fall is such, that the Natural or Carnal Man, that is enmity against God in the state of mere Ro. 8.5.7, 8. Nature, minds only the things of the Flesh, and naturally brings forth the Works thereof, and cannot please God, nor keep and observe his Laws, but is prone to evil; yet that those who embrace the Visitation of God, and are 1 Pet. 1. 23. really Regenerated, and born again of Heb. 4.12. incorruptible Seed, by the Word of God that lives and abides for ever, that ingrafted Word that is quick and powerJam. 1.21. Joh. 17. 17. 19. ful, and able to Save and Sanctify the Soul, are born into a new Life, and invested with another and higher power, and becomes Spiritually minded, and by Joh. 3. 6. the Spirit are set at liberty to walk af-

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ter the Spirit, and bring forth it's fruits, and receive ability from the Spirit to ſerve God acceptably, being now led by the Spirit of God, and become his Children, taught of him, and through the Spirit of Adoption receiv'd into their Hearts, have right to call God Father, and Jeſus Lord: For having through the Spirit mortified the Old Man or firſt Nature, with his corrupt and depraved inclinations, and evil Deeds, and put him off, having crucified the Fleſh, with the affections and luſts thereof, they put on the New and Heavenly Man, which after God is created in righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, and being renewed in the Spirit of their Minds, they now walk in Newneſs of Life, and are really in Chriſt, and therefore are changed and become new Creatures; and now think and act under the conduct of a principle Superiour to that which formerly governed them, having their Minds raiſed to a Region above that of fallen Nature; ſo that now the ſtream of their thoughts, deſires and actions, runs in another current, and the bent of their affections are after thoſe things, that are above where Chriſt is; that Eye being now open'd that ſees a more tranſcendent beauty and deſireableneſs in the in-

Ro. 8. 14, 15. 1 Cor. 12. 3. Ro. 8. 13. & 6. 6. Eph. 4. 22, 23, 24. Gal. 5. 24. Col. 3. 9. 10. Ro. 6. 4. & 7. 6. Col. 3. 1, 2.

visible and durable treasures of him, than all the transcient felicities of this World can afford.

And we believe, That whosoever expects the blessed imputation of Christ's Righteousness, ought thus to put on the Lord Jesus, and to be thus cloathed upon, and covered with his Righteousness, and in measure have his Holy Life brought forth in and through them, and know him to enliven and influence their Minds, and to work in and for them; and that without him they can do nothing; but through him that strengthens them, they can do whatsoever he commands them; that as they abide living branches in him, through that sap and vertue they daily receive from him, they are made able to bring forth fruits well-pleasing to God, whereby he is glorified. For though God the Father accepts us in Christ, and for his sake; yet is the New-Birth the indispensible Qualification, and true distinguishing Mark of those that are really in him. He that is in Christ is a new Creature: *Old things are past away, behold, all things are become New. John* says, *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* We ascribe nothing to Man, as having any power

Rom. 13. 14.

Isa. 26. 12. Phil. 2. 13. and 4. 13. Joh. 15. 5.

Joh. 15. 5, 8.

2 Cor. 5. 17. Gal. 6. 15. 1 Joh. 2. 6. & 3. 7, 8, 9.

or

or ability in or of himſelf to pleaſe God, but attribute all power to do that which is good to Chriſt alone, in whom only the Father is well-pleaſed. 'Tis through him that Men ſo love and fear God, as to eſchew evil, and work that Righteouſneſs which is acceptable to him; upon whom therefore Mans dependance ought to be daily, to receive from him ſuch ſuitable ſupplies, as through a conſtant watchfulneſs may enable them ſo to walk, as to continue in his favour, and enjoy his ſmiles. For 'tis not, as too many ſeem either to imagine, or would gladly have it to be, that they may live in ſin and diſobedience here, and indulge their corrupt inclinations; and yet hereafter have Chriſt's Righteouſneſs imputed to them. For though we are not under the *Moſaical* Law, ſo as to be obliged to its Ordinances, diverſe Waſhings, and *Levitical* Prieſt-hood, Chriſt our High-Prieſt having offer'd up himſelf once for all, and aboliſh't it; yet are we not ſo under Grace, as to be diſcharged from living well; though we are not tyed to its Rites and Ceremonies; yet are we obliged to fulfil its Righteouſneſs, which Chriſt came not to deſtroy but to eſtabliſh: For though God be gracious and merciful to for-

Joh. 15. 4, 5. Acts 10. 34, 35. 1 Pet. 4. 18. Mat. 5. 20. Ro. 3. 31. & 8. 3, 4.

give us our Treſpaſſes through the mediation of Chriſt, upon our true and
Iſa. 55. 7. hearty Repentance, and turning from them; yet 'tis not that we ſhould take a liberty to go on in Sin and Rebellion against him. We are not to ſin be-
Ro. 6. 1, 2. cauſe he is gracious, that his Grace may abound; if ſo, Where is the ſtraitneſs of this way? If this be to take up a daily Croſs to our own Wills that we may perform his. Pray where is the liberty of the Fleſh? Thoſe that are vertually in Chriſt, which renders them acceptable to the Father, and compleatly eſpouſed to him, muſt needs have reſigned their Wills, as an effect of true love, and requiſite to ſo ſtrict an union; oppoſite Wills being inconſiſtent therewith, whence Obedience neceſſarily follows. The Apoſtle *John*, after having ſignified that God is Light, and that thoſe that would know the
1 Joh. 1. 5, 7. Blood of cleanſing, and true fellowſhip with him, and one another, ought to walk in the Light as he is in the Light, tells the young and weak in the Faith, whom he calls Children, that he writ thoſe things, that they ſhould not ſin; but yet if any through weakneſs or inadvertency ſhould ſin, and ſo fall under the Fathers diſpleaſure, he tells them,

that Christ the Righteous is both a Propitiation and also an Advocate that intercedes with the Father; and that their keeping his Commands, was the surest evidence of their knowing and being in him; but of the strong, whom therefore he calls young Men, he says, *That the word of God abode in them, and that they had overcome the Evil one.* Chap. 2. and first 6 Verses.

These things may soon be spoken and comprehended in the Understanding; but to experience them fulfill'd in our selves, is our highest interest, and only can make us sharers in them. The essence of Christianity, and happiness of Christians, don't consist in having our Heads stuft with knowledge, only to lodge there and feed upon; but to have our Hearts filled with divine love, which animates us to diligence, and inspires us with courage and vigor to observe and perform the Will of God; who looks not at what People profess only, or by what name they are call'd, but regards the Heart, and what Principle governs there: People may make a profession of the best things; and yet continue alive to themselves; they may alter Opinion or Persuasion, and yet not turn from Darkness to Light, from the power of Satan to God. There hath not been wanting Joh. 14. 21, 23.

a very large and ſplendid Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, adorned with curious, elaborate, and elevated Notions, poliſh'd with Rhetorick and Oratory; but that power and life that reaches the Heart, and gives Victory and Dominion over its luſts and affections, which war againſt the Soul, is that which too many are yet ſtrangers to: When yet to know our lapſed Souls reſtored from their firſt fallen ſtate in *Adam*, and raiſed to a ſtation where we may both perceive the things of God, and receive power to work his Will; to know our Minds redeemed, and that power vanquiſht which led us captive, and we leaven'd by the Heavenly Gift, into its own nature; as 'tis the very Life and Marrow of that Religion, about whoſe exterior parts the world is filled with Noiſe; ſo 'tis the proper and moſt concerning-buſineſs of our lives, to find this great ſalvation accompliſh'd in us. The experimental working out whereof in the Heart, by the ſaving Grace and Spirit of God, that is given to Man to profit with, will yield more ſatisfaction and true contentment to that Soul, that ſincerely ſeeks the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteouſneſs thereof, in whom 'tis begun and carrying on, than to

Gal. 6.3,4.

hear

hear or read all their days of what God hath done through all Ages, for those that truly love and fear him: For want of which 'tis, that the profession of Christianity is generally so empty and barren in producing a real Pious Life, attended with the fruits of the Spirit, and a due Obedience proceeding from the birth of the Spirit, without which the most refined Methods of Worship and Devotion will not recommend us to God, who is inaccessible *by the birth of the Flesh.* Nor do we believe that 'tis acceptable to God for People to sing before him those Songs and Psalms, that were the Experiences and spiritual Exercises of Holy Men in times past, without having some living Experience of the same things in themselves; or that People can properly and truly speak more, or farther of the things of God, than what they have known and experienced.

Where amongst all these sound Gospel-Scriptural-Truths, is lodg'd that latent Venome so much fear'd and talk'd of by our Adversaries, that is so dangerously contagious, and apt to infect the Minds of those that shall incline to converse with Us, or our Books, touching our Belief in these necessary Points of

Christianity? Which of them is it, that being imbibed, is more mortal and destructive to the Soul, and defiles it more than drinking a Draught of Poyson, or going to a Bawdy-house? Where are those damnable Opinions and Heresies wherewith you have been terrified? Which of them is it, that being persisted in, does necessarily lead to Damnation, and for which the * *Devil must needs carry us a pick-pack to Hell*? Is it in that we hold forth the infinite Love of God to Mankind, in not only freely of his meer Grace and Favour, providing a Sacrifice, through which an Atonement is made for the past Transgressions of Man, who was never at all in a capacity to make any for himself; which is applicable to every one who shall believe, repent and return; but hath also afforded to all the means of Faith, Repentance and Conversion; for God requires not impossibilities of Men, but expects they should improve those talents distributed to them: In not only sending forth the Son of his love to dye for their Sins, that they should no longer live therein, but also in sending forth his Light and Spirit of Truth into their Hearts, to lead and guide them into all Truth; and

As said *Tho. Vincent.*

* *T. R's* unsavory & uncharitable Expression.

Joh. 3. 15, 16. Act. 10. 43. 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Joh. 14. 16, 17, 26. & 16. 13.

nd causing his Grace that brings Sal- Tit. 2. 11,
ation, to appear to all Men, to in- 12.
ruct and teach them to deny all Un-
odliness and Worldly Lusts, to for-
ake the Devil and all his Works, the
omps and Vanities of this wicked
World; to rescue and save them from
iving in the sinful Lusts of the Flesh,
nd help and strengthen them to re-
urn to their Obedience, and live a So-
er, Righteous and Godly Life; to
eep God's Holy Will and Command-
ments, and walk in the same all the
days of their Lives.

Which Gift from God to Man, the Holy Scriptures plentifully testifie too, under various denominations, as Spirit, Light, Word, Grace, Seed, Leaven, Anointing, *&c.* By all which we understand that Spirit or Heavenly Talent, with which God hath endowed Mankind in some degree or other, that he may profit with it; in the improvement whereof, by a diligent Co-working therewith, to the answering those holy ends for which we receive it, we doubt not but to be happy in rendring a good account of our Stewardship, and entring finally into the Joy of our Lord. Our Opposers themselves also pretend to the Spirit and Grace of God, Mat. 25. 14, 15.

God, or else what means their Pray-
ing for its Assistance, and those plau-
sible fine-spun Discourses of it, where-
with they sometimes entertain their Au-
ditory: We Charitably hope 'tis more
real, than only to beautify and recom-
mend them to the Hearers, as what
they cannot well avoid, for that the
Scriptures are so full of that Language;
and if indeed it be real, why is that
Fault and Error in us, which is so sound
and ornamental in them? And we think
it very strange that they should appre-
hend any incongruity in granting this
Divine Principle to be a Divine Light
to the Mind; since its proper Office is
to teach and instruct, to manifest and
point to us our Duty, as well as to dis-
pose and enable us to perform it; and
Tit. 2. 11, 12. ought to be our Leader and Governour.
Joh. 14. 17, 26. & 16. 7, 8, 13, 14. 1 Joh. 2. 27. If the Godly Admonitions, and Exem-
plary Lives of Good Men, were rightly
called Lights to the World, surely much
more properly may this, whose Foun-
tain is Light, (and does more nearly il-
luminate and inform the Understand-
ing, and renders those effectual,) justly
challenge that necessary and acceptable
appellation. If then the Grace and
Spirit of God be in the Hearts of Men,
surely 'tis not wholly unactive there,

but

will be making some Attempts wards accomplishing the end for hich 'tis placed there; 'twill be at nes attacking the Enemy, and endeauring to supplant its contrary, for ing holy and pure in its Nature, its ver reconcileable to Sin and Evil, t ever strives against it, and may, as en regard it, be infallibly known by e nature of its efforts. And we dare ppeal even to all Mankind, whether ey find not something placed in their inds and Consciences, which though erhaps not regent there, yet never ingles with, nor consents to their e- l deeds, but always remains undefi- d, and testifies against them, and con- icts, reproves, and condems them for Joh. 3. 20, 21. Eph. 5. 13. ; and also oft-times in the cooler emper of their Spirits, manifests their ates to them, and as 'twere Reasons ith them, discovering the evil of their ays, secretly calling to them to come ut of it; begetting Desires and Incliations, sometimes to seek after God, nd to make their Peace with him. Now since Man in his meer natural tate, is totally Dead, and fallen from God, that he cannot as of himself think good Thought; and that God only s essentially good, and as that which

is

is truly ſo, muſt needs proceed fr
Joh. 16. 8, 13. him; this Principle in us that ever co
victs us for Vice and Evil, whether
Thought Word or Deed, and diſpoſe
Prov. 14. 13. us to conſider of our latter end, a
oft makes Men ſigh in the midſt
Laughter, reminding them, that f
thoſe things they muſt give an A
count; that draws us Heaven-ward
and inclines us to Vertue and Goo
neſs, to do to all Men as we would
done unto; to be Juſt, Sober, Merc
ful, Temperate, *&c.* Muſt needs
ſomething that is not of us, but
pure and immaculate, and of a divi
nature; ever *aſpiring*, and raiſing th
Mind towards its Original.

Whence it cannot be a Natural Light
or meer light of Nature, as very man
would have it, who yet talk of the Sp
rit of God being in Man; for 'tis a
undoubted truth, that no Agent ca
act beyond its own ſphere, and rai
its object to a ſtate more noble tha
it ſelf, nor produce effects of a Natur
more ſublime than its own Original
Beſides, 'tis very clear and eviden
Job 21. 17. Pſal. 18. 28. from Scripture, that the Mind of Ma
is oft lighted by a Light ſuperiour to
that of meer Reaſon, and that Man by
the utmoſt power and extent of Hu-
mane

ne Reaſon and Speculation, (though may arrive to an implicit know-ge that there is a God, yet) can ver attain to a true, ſpiritual and ving knowledge of God, without the oncurrence of a Divine and Super- tural Agent: For though the Mind Man as a Rational Being, be that apacity or Candle that is to be Light- , yet 'tis Chriſt that muſt ſo en- ghten it, as to give us a true diſ- rning of thoſe things, that appertain o him and his Kingdom; and by ad- ering and yielding Obedience to its Diſcoveries, we ſhall know an Acceſſion f more Light. And the Apoſtle ſpeak- ng of what God by his Spirit had re- ealed to them, ſaith expreſly, that he ſpirit ſearcheth all things, yea the eep things of God; and that as none knows the things of a Man, ſave the Spirit of Man which is in him, ſo the things of God knows no Man but the Spirit of God: That the Natural Man neither knoweth nor receiveth the things of the Spirit of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned, and to that end they had received the Spirit which is of God. The Light of Na-ture is occupied about natural Objects, thoſe things that are within its own Region,

Ro. 1. 19. 2 Cor. 4. 6. Prov. 20. 27. Luk. 24. 45. Joh. 1. 9. Eph. 5. 13, 14, 17. Pſal. 36. 9. Prov. 4. 18. 1 Cor. 2. 10. to the end.

Region, acting within its own prop
Orb; but reaches not to that know
ledg of God, which is Life Eternal, e
cept our natural Powers, or human C
pacity be illuminated by the Rays
Divine Light; for the World by H
mane Wisdom knows not God. A
1 Cor. 1. 20. Christ saith very plainly and positiv
ly, That none knows the Father but t
Mat. 11: 27. Son, and he to whom the Son revea
him.

That these strugglings in us should b
the suggestions of Satan, that he shou
disquiet and disturb People for their
Sins, for serving him, and put them
upon endeavouring to be freed from
their vassalage under his power, were
absurd to imagine; no, our Saviour
puts that beyond a Question, when he
Mark 3. 24, 27. asks, Can a Kingdom divided against
Luk. 11. 21. it self stand? And by and by saith plain
ly, That whilst the Strong Man arm'd
keeps the House, his Goods are at
peace, till a stronger than he comes to
bind him, &c. So that 'tis clear it's
not the Devil, but the approaches of
a Superiour Power, that breaks the peace
of People for Sin, and that follows
and condemns them for Disobedience
and Transgression, and is the same that
would, and only can redeem their Minds

out

t of that miserable state, and bind at Strong Man, and break his power, d cast him out, would they but joyn ereto, and accept of Deliverance by

Nor does its being extended to all len, through all Ages from their Youth wards, bespeak it to be therefore na- ral or contemptible; but on the con- rary, of the greater moment to all len: For besides that the Apostle saith, manifestation of the Spirit is given o every Man to profit withal, the Bles- ings and Gifts of God are free and va- uable from their intrinsick worth; God in nature ordained nothing in vain, ut by how much any thing is of the greatest use to us, for sustaining and ccommodating our natural Life, the more common it is, as the Sun that gives Light to all thro' all Ages, *&c.* 'Tis we fondly rate things according to our Fancies, and esteem and prize them more for their Rarity and Curiosity, than Usefulness; but God bestows most universally that which is of the abso- lutest necessity to Man. Are not all Men that are born, Strangers and E- nemies to God, in the dark, and at a distance from him, in the State of Na- ture, and must therefore be enlightned, con-

1 Cor. 12. 7.

Jo. 3. 3.

converted, and born again, and becom
Spiritural, before we can be reconcil
to him; ſhall not God then, that wou
1 Tim. 2. have all Repent and be Saved, can
3, 4. the Light of the Son of Righteou
2 Pet. 3.9. neſs to ſhine upon all, and give
meaſure of his Grace and Spirit to a
to aſſiſt them in the accompliſhment
that in themſelves, which they cann
do of themſelves, and yet is of indi
penſable neceſſity to our Salvation
Wherefore God by his Spirit ſtrive
with Man ſo long as his day of Viſit
tion laſts.

Since then our Oppoſers acknow
ledge the Spirit and Grace of God
which alſo is Light to be in Man, un
leſs they can ſhew it, by its manifeſt
ly different and ſuperiour nature, ten
dency and operation, to be contradi
ſtinct, from that we have been ſpeak
ing of; we ſee neither abſurdity nor
error in concluding it to be one and
the ſame grace and free-gift of God to
all, which is always the ſame in na
ture, though it differs in degree; and
is that Heavenly Treaſure, which God
hath committed to our truſt. And bleſ
ſed will they be, who rightly employ
Mat. 13. and improve it, and give place and
31, 32. room to this ſeed of the Kingdom in

their

their Hearts, where, though it may appear at first contrary to the expectation of Man, little, mean and contemptible, scarcely regarded amongst the stuff, wherewith Mens Minds are filled; yet joyn but to it, that it may exert its power and energie, and 'twill grow and increase; let but this leaven have its perfect work, and 'twill leaven the whole lump into its own Nature. Mat. 13. 33. Luk. 13. 21.

Be pleased to consider, whether we have justly merited the invidious invectives of our Adversaries, in believing that the Lord searches the Heart of Man, and shews him his Thoughts; that he hath, and will remember this latter Age of the World; and hath not forgotten to be gracious in performing those bountiful Promises made in times past to the Off-spring of the *Gentiles*, in placing his Law in our Hearts, and putting his Truth in our inward parts; in pouring out of his Spirit upon all the Sons and Daughters of Men; in becoming our Teacher; and giving us the knowledge of himself, through the Revelation of his Son Jesus Christ; who is come to open our blind Eyes, and to bring us, that were bound in darkness, out of the Prison-house, who hath promised to be with his People to the end Jer. 17. 10. Ro. 8. 27. Rev. 2. 23. Amos 4. 13. Jer. 31. 33. 34. Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Joel 2. 28, 29. Act. 2. 16, 17, 18. Isa. 54. 13. Mat. 11. 27. Isa. 42. 7. and 61. 1.

Joh. 14. 16, 17, 26. & 16. 7. of the World; in believing that God hath ſent us the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, to be our Remembrancer, and to guide and direct us in the way of Truth; in atteſting the ſufficiency and utility of the Teachings of this Holy Unction, ſent into our Hearts; in believing that though Chriſt be in his glorified Body in Heaven; yet that he is preſent alſo in the Hearts of his People; who is King of Saints, and ſhall he not then rule in them? The High and Holy One that inhabits Eternity, hath promiſed to dwell alſo with the Humble and Contrite, to revive and comfort them; ſhall not he, whoſe Preſence fills Heaven and Earth, be preſent in the Heart of Man? Shall not he that rejoyceth in the habitable parts of the Earth, and delights in the Sons of Men, reſide in his People? Are they not Members of him, and he their Head? Can there be a more intimate Union and Communion than between the Head and the Body, the Vine and the Branches? The ſame Spirit of Life that is in the Head, is the Life of the Body alſo, and acts it; he that is joyned to the Lord is one Spirit; doth not the Life that is in the Root, paſs to the Branches alſo, and preſerve them living?

1 Joh. 2. 20, 27.

Joh. 14. 17, 20, 23. & 17. 23, 26.

Iſa. 57. 15.

2 Cor. 6. 16.

Prov. 8. 31.

1 Cor. 6. 15, 17, 19.

Joh. 15. 4, 5.

living? Are not all dead Branches, in whom this Life is not? Whosoever hath the Son of God, and feeds on him, hath Life by him; and those that have not Christ, who is the Life of his Saints, have not Life: How could his People in all Ages partake of him, if he were not present in them? Surely this Doctrin don't deserve to be scoft, but is most comfortable to those who are sick of Love, and thirst ardently after the Enjoyment [not Hear-say] of him. Joh. 6.56, 57. 1 Jo. 5.12.

Consider seriously these things which are agreeable to Scripture, and with what reason People have derided us for our Belief herein; terming it the Quakers Christ; as though his manifesting himself in our Hearts were another, or distinct from Jesus Christ of *Nazareth*, that is glorified with God the Father in Heaven, which we deny: For though he be ascended into Heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, far above all Principalities and Powers; yet is not he so circumscribed, but that (as by him all things were made and created so) he is the Life and Fulness, and filleth all in all in his Church and People. Is the Divinity and Humanity of Christ divided? Is not their insepa- Ro. 10.6, 7, 8. 2 Cor. 13. 5. Col. 1.27. Col. 1.16. Eph. 1.23. & 3.9. & 4.10.

rable Union the true and intire Christ? Can then his God-head be present, and he, who is the Heavenly Man be absent? What think you of him that appear'd to *John*, and gave him his Commission to the Seven Churches? whom he describes, *Rev.* Ch. 1. who saith, *Behold,* Rev. 3.20. & 2. 23. *I stand at the door and knock, if any Man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* The same saith, *I am he which searches the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works*: Was not this the true Act. 17.31. Christ the Mediator, by whom God Ro. 2. 16. will judge the World? And can he make this near inspection into the innermost part of the Minds of Men, so as no Thought can escape his notice, if he be not present there? What made 2 Tim. 4. 22. *Paul* desire that our Lord Jesus Christ might be with *Timothy*'s Spirit, if he Joh. 1. 16. thought it impossible? Do not all ac- 1Joh. 4.13. knowledge the Spirit of Christ, who is the Anointed, to be in his People, and is he then absent? Is its being a Mystery, far beyond our comprehension to conceive how it can be; a sufficient Argument that therefore 'tis not so? Ought we not in such cases to exercise Faith? and acquiesce in the Testimony

of the Holy Ghoſt, expreſt in the Sacred Scriptures, rather than interpoſe with our nice and curious Subtilties? prying unneceſſarily into things that are too high for us; remembring that Secret things belong to God; and that thoſe that know moſt here, know only in part the things that are invi- 1 Cor. 13. ſible; and ſee them but as through a 9, 12. Glaſs. Shall Men that neither know themſelves, nor have any intuitive knowledge of the Eſſences, even of the meaneſt things, wherewith Nature every-where preſents us, which are obvious to our Senſes, aſpire to thoſe yet more abſtruce, and undertake to account for that which is beyond the reach of the moſt pregnant Wits to penetrate.

Nor do we thus celebrate Chriſt's inward and ſpiritual appearance in the Soul of Man, with the leaſt intent to diminiſh the true value and efficacy of what he did without us, or tranſacted for us as God manifeſted in Fleſh, but in concurrence with it, and purſuant to it, for the compleating the Salvation intended in it; neither is it, in oppoſition to him, as he is without us; but we believe in him, as he is inwardly revealed in meaſure, and alſo as he is

in his own immenſe fulneſs without us, both as he is the one Offering for Sin, and alſo as he is that quickening Spirit, and immortal Seed by which we are begotten again, and made alive to God; and the Author of that Living Faith, through which 'tis ſavingly applied to us. For though he offered up himſelf once for all, and ſat down at the right Hand of God, yet 'tis of abſolute neceſſity that he thus appear and operate in the Hearts of his People through all times, or otherwiſe they can never be happy, nor they receive the full advantage of his Death. But that he doth thus appear and work, is moſt evident; for ſince he is the alone Saviour, and none are ſaved but thoſe who are Regenerated, that Grace or Operative Divine Agent (that is the Efficient of true ſaving Faith and Regeneration,) muſt needs be Chriſt in us, our Hope of Glory. Wherefore 'tis that we ſo frequently invite People to regard, believe in, cloſe with, and ſubmit to him, as he is the true Light, diſcovering Evil thus manifeſted in their inward Parts, for the full accompliſhing their Redemption and Reſtoration, that they may taſte and ſee for themſelves, that the Lord is good and gracious

cious; and to Christ within, otherwise than thus, a measure of the anointing from the Anointed, we don't pretend, whatever People have apprehended concerning us. Which truth our very Opposers are obliged to acknowledge, notwithstanding they so ridicule it in us.

We hope it's no Error to avouch the Power of Christ to be stronger than that of the Devil; that he is able really to bind him, to bruise his Head, and break his Power, to dispossess and cast him out; to fulfil to the uttermost the end of his coming; to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to save those from their Sins, who shall have true Faith in his Name and Power: Surely it's not inconsistent with Christianity, to believe that Christ can or will, throughly purge his Floor; that he can indeed deliver out of the Prison-house, and restore Man out of the Fall to God again, and give him power to forsake the Devil, and all his Works, &c.

Gen. 3. 15.

1 Thes. 5. 23.

We find it consonant to Scripture, and the Gospel-dispensation, to believe that those who are regenerated and born again of the Spirit, have through the Spirit mortified the first carnal corrupt Nature, which cannot please God;

Ro. 6. 6, 7, 11. 2 Pet. 1. 4.

Eph. 4.22, 23, 24. Col. 3. 9, 10. and if dead, and slain, and buried too, surely then it no longer lives, but the Mind is at liberty, and restored to act in a new Life; to walk after the Spirit, and fulfil the Righteousness of the Law;

Ro. 8.2,4. the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, having set them free from the Law of Sin, and Death which is its Wages. 'Tis for want of Peoples experiencing this real Birth of the Spirit brought forth, and knowing Freedom in themselves by it, which no Duties or Performances in the Will of Man, nor entertaining of the most refined Opinions in Religion can administer, short of the Law of the Spirit of Christ in their Hearts; 'tis for want of this, that People are so very apprehensive of difficulty, even to impossibility, of living a Holy Righteous Life; which yet is so

Mat. 5. 8. Heb. 12. 14. necessary to our Salvation, that without it we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven, nor see God. Nor is the way broader, or its Passage less strait and difficult than they imagine; nay, 'tis utterly impossible for them to walk therein, while they are immers'd in their first corrupt unbridled Nature, which cannot keep the Law of God; while their Lusts and Passions are rampant, their Affections inordinate, and

Wills

Wills unsubjected, and follow the Desires and evil Inclinations of their Minds without restraint. But if they come to know another Principle and Power to govern their Minds, to create in them new clean Hearts, to regulate and subject their Wills, to subdue and tame their Passions, to limit their Desires, and direct their Affections and Inclinations wholly after that which is good, to meliorate their Spirits throughout, and make them Heavenly Minded, having an aversion to all Evil, and a great love to Vertue and Goodness: Being thus perfectly transformed, where is the extream difficulty now, for the good Man, out of the good Treasure of his Heart, to bring forth good things? Will not this new well-inclin'd inside, that now detests Evil, and loves and delights in Righteousness, as naturally follow after, and bring forth that which is Good, as before he did Evil? Here is no force upon Peoples Natures, but they are converted, and throughly leavened into another Nature, and are in their measures Partakers of the Divine Nature, which only can work the Will of God.

Mat. 12. 35.

2 Pet. 1. 4

We

We request our prudently-inclined Neighbours, well and seriously to weigh and consider, the absolute necessity there is for every true Christian, thus to know their Minds moulded and fashioned anew, by the Power and Spirit of Christ, working mightily in them, in order to their pleasing God by a Holy Righteous Life, having escaped the corruption that is in the World through Lust; and considering that 'tis not so soon attained, as apprehended in the Understanding to be necessary: That with all diligence they address themselves to the performing that which is the main and proper business of our Lives. Wherefore as it hath pleased the Divine Power to give us all things pertaining to Life and Godliness, so let us with a vigilant attention to, and co-working with that Grace, which to that end is given, work out our Salvation with a reverend fear; since a good degree of attainment herein is soon lost, except there be a constant sedulous watchfulness upon the Mind amidst all Business and Concerns, to have a check upon our Words and Thoughts, and a diligent pressing forward: For while we livein this World, we are liable

Col. 1. 29.

2 Pet. 1. 3. Tit. 2. 11, 12. Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Mat. 26. 41.

to

o Temptations, and may enter there-
nto also, without a strict care and
vatchfulness; our Senses presenting
many Baits to our Minds on every
and, which Satan makes use of to
eguile, and many Provocations offer
hemselves in our Pilgrimage; against 2 Cor. 12.
ll which God's Grace is sufficient Ar- 9.
nour, as our Minds are seasoned by
; so that where any shortness is, 'tis
hrough Insincerity, Negligence, or In-
dvertency.

Or is it a dangerous heinous Here-
ie that we with very many Professors
f Christianity, believe the Universa- Psal. 145. 9
ity of the Love of God to all Man-
kind; that God (who is good to all,
whose Mercies extend to all the Works
of his Hands;) is sincere in his Inten-
ion, and Attestation thereof, and doth
ot design to delude us, when he af-
irms, That as certainly as he lives,
e desires not the death of a Sinner, Ezek. 33.
ut rather that he would return and 11. & 18.
Live; that God, whose Love and Mer- 23.
y is unlimited, doth graciously and Joh. 3. 14,
enerously offer Salvation, through Je- 15, 16, 17.
us Christ, (upon certain Conditions to Isa. 55. 1.
e performed on our part) to all Man- Rev. 22.
kind, to every individual Man and Wo- 17.
man upon the face of the Earth; which Ro. 5. 18.

is

Luke 2. 10, 14. is the true Goſpel-meſſage, good Tydings of great Joy, which ſhall be to all People, Peace on Earth, and good will towards Men; good cauſe indeed Iſa. 55. 7. to rejoyce, that all are within the verge Ezek. 18. 21, 22, to the end. of Mercy and free Pardon; that God is indeed no Reſpecter of Perſons, Act. 10. 34, 35. but among all Nations and People, he or ſhe that fears him, and works 1 Joh. 2. 2. Righteouſneſs, is of him accepted; Heb. 2. 9. and that Chriſt died for the Sins of the whole World, yea, for every Man; Tit. 2. 11. ſurely then all for whom he died, are thereby put into a capacity for Salvation; that Saving Grace hath appeared to all Men, and a Manifeſtation of the Spirit is given to every Man to profit withal. And that none are Reprobated, but thoſe that continue to be deaf to the Calls of this Grace, and reſiſt the Spirit, and hide and neglect their Talents till the day of their Viſitation be over; and Chriſt ſo withdraws himſelf, as to ceaſe longer to ſtrive with them; ſo that the means being taken away, they are left to themſelves, and given up to Hardneſs of Heart; that being abſent, that ſhould prepare, tender and mollifie it, that now they can-

1 Cor. 12. 7.

See Pro. 1. from 20, to the end.

Mat. 23. 37

Neh. 9. 20, 26.

Iſa. 63. 10.

Pſal. 81. 11, 12, 13.

not

ot Repent, Believe and be Con-
erted.

If thus to believe, be a dangerous nd pernicious Error, we confeſs we re Guilty, and not like to be other-iſe; for we cannot perſwade our elves to embrace that Anti-evangeli-al Opinion, That God from all Eter-nity hath perſonally and inconditio-nally, without reſpect to their accept-ing or rejecting the Salvation offer'd in Chriſt, elected ſome, and repro-bated others by an immutable De-cree, ſo that thoſe who are ſo elect-ed ſhall certainly be ſaved, let them do what they will, for God's Decree can't be revers'd, let the unſtable Mind of Man vary as it will: And thoſe that are Reprobated, were in in effect damned Thouſands of Years before they were born; ſo that their Salvation is put beyond all hope, let them ſeek it never ſo earneſtly and di-ligently, and be never ſo deſirous to ſerve and pleaſe God. For beſides, that this ſad Tidings, inſtead of glad Tidings, if it were really true in it ſelf, puts an end to the whole buſineſs of Religion, by rendring all Wor-ſhip and Devotion, all Preaching, Praying, Aſſembling together, and Ho-

ly

ly Living as 'twere uſeleſs, by invalidating all whatſoever on Man's part as nothing contributing (as a neceſſary Condition on his part to be performed or neglected) towards his Salvation or eternal Deſtruction. We dare not take up an Opinion ſo diametrically oppoſite to the very Attributes of God, and his repeated Proteſtations to the contrary, and with ſome Men thus preſume to arraign his Juſtice, Mercy and Goodneſs. We cannot believe that God who is Love it ſelf, and Goodneſs it ſelf, and hath always manifeſted a wonderful Care and Concern for Man as his darling Creature; (it being diſagreeable to his Juſtice, to condemn thoſe that have not deſerved to be puniſhed, and having no pleaſure in the death of him that dies,) ſhould yet make the major part of Mankind with deſign to damn them, unprovok'd thereto, without ever tendring them Salvation; or that he would make the far greater number wholly uncapable of accepting the Salvation tendred them, by putting it out of their power to perform thoſe Terms upon which he offers it, and then condemn them to eternal Miſery, for not complying with thoſe Conditions

Wiſ. 12. 15, 16.

Ezek. 18. 32.

Wiſ. 11. 23, 24.

ditions, that 'twas impossible for them to observe. For he don't only call to all the ends of the Earth (which implies all Mankind) to look to him, and be saved; but he hath given to every one a Portion of his Spirit to enable them so to do; he hath not only sent forth the Son of his Love to shed his Blood for every Man, to be lifted up as *Moses* lifted up the Brazen Serpent, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish; but he also draws them, and as they will receive it, toucheth them with that Divine Magnet that only can incline and impower them effectually to turn to that Pole, in which all our true Happiness centers. Isa. 45.22. Joh. 3.14, 15, 16. Joh. 6.44, 45.

But this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil; and hate the Light, and will not bring their Deeds to it, lest it should reprove them; for whatsoever is reprovable, is made manifest by the Light, but Men love their own broad ways, to pursue the sight of their Eyes, and desire of their Minds, and therefore hate to be control'd therein and reform'd. The Apostle stirring up the Joh. 3.19, 20. Eph. 5.13. Eccl. 11.9.

Ephesians

Epheſians to Purity of Life, and to a-
void ſeveral Evils there mentioned,
Eph. 5. 6, 7. ſaith expreſly, *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words: for becauſe of theſe things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience.* And in another
Ro. 8. 13. place, *That thoſe who live after the Fleſh ſhall die.* So that 'tis for want of Peo-
ples embracing the Means, and bring-
ing their Deeds to the Light of Chriſt
in their Hearts, and heeding the Re-
Pro. 6. 23. proofs of Inſtruction, which is the way
Gal. 6. 8. of Life; for want of ſowing to the
Spirit, and by it mortifying the Deeds
of the Fleſh, that People are loſt and
ſentenced to Perdition; and not be-
cauſe they were perſonally and incon-
ditionally reprobated from all Eter-
1 Tim. 2. nity. God who is Lord of all, is gra-
3, 4. cious unto all, and would have all Men
to be ſaved; but they diſobey the
Call of God, and reject his Offers, and
reſiſt the Strivings of his Spirit, and
are deaf to thoſe Knocks of our Sa-
Rev. 3. 20. viour for Reception and Entertainment
in their Hearts, and chooſe and pre-
fer the preſent World, and will not
deny themſelves to follow Chriſt. 'Tis
not as theſe Men ſay, becauſe Salva-
tion was never within their reach;
if 'twere not, what muſt we think?

Were

Were thoſe feigned Tears then, that our Saviour ſhed over *Jeruſalem*, when the Day of its Viſitation was over? Saying alſo, *How often would I have gathered thee, as a Hen gathers her Chickens, but you would not*; not you could not. Luke 13. 34. Mat. 23. 37.

But if any Men can be ſo hardy as to entertain an Opinion ſo derogatory to the Juſtice, Mercy, Love and Paternal Care of God, and repugnant to the Goſpel-meſſage; we cannot but admire what ſhould induce them to obtrude it upon others, and urge it as though 'twas a neceſſary Point to be believed in the Chriſtian Religion; for we cannot apprehend how this begets Love to God, increaſeth Faith in Chriſt, and raiſeth our Veneration for him, excites to Diligence, and encourages Piety, which is that which advanceth true Religion; but on the contrary, it's plain, that it tends to the indulging ſome in a Security, and procure in others a ſlight Eſteem of the Death and Sacrifice of Chriſt, as being partial, and caſts them into Deſpond; and probably may encourage both to gratifie the Deſires of their Minds to the full extent, ſince nothing can alter ſuch a ſuppoſed

Decree of God one way or the other. Yet we deny not the Preſcience of God, who fore-knows all things; things paſt, preſent, and to come, being at once preſent to him: ſo that it may be ſaid, ſuch who believe in Chriſt with that living active Faith, that works by Love, and excites to Obedience, and perſevere therein unto the end, and ſo know Salvation by him, are in him in whom the Election is before the World began; and that thoſe who ſo believe not, but reject the Tenders of his Love, and by perſiſting in Diſobedience, neglect ſo great Salvation, are condemned already. Nor do we deny ſuch a Preference, as that ſome are made Stewards over more, and ſome fewer Talents, according to which their Improvement ought to be: Where much is given, much is required; and where leſs is given, leſs is required; for God is juſt and equal in all his Ways, he is not a hard Maſter, that he ſhould exact or expect more than the Improvement of his own: Had he that received but one Talent, imploy'd it, and made it Two, we doubt not but it had been accepted; for we believe that none are

Mat. 25. 14, to the 28.

from

from Eternity abſolutely excluded without any Talent, and that a Day alſo is afforded, wherein 'tis poſſible for them to improve it. So that though the Grace may work more powerfully in ſome than in others, yet are all left without Excuſe.

There is yet another Opinion dependant on this, which we cannot receive neither, as they ſtate it, for which our Oppoſers think very ill of us; that is, once in a ſtate of Grace and ever ſo; that there is no total or final falling away from Grace. How this Doctrin promotes true Zeal and Piety, and improves Chriſtianity, we can't underſtand; nor ſee no other reaſon why its Votaries ſhould be ſo fond of it, but becauſe 'tis concordant to that of Perſonal Election and Reprobation; ſo that thoſe who imbrace the one, are bound to believe the other: But otherwiſe, certainly it tends rather to ſlacken than ſpur on People to that care and diligence, and conſtant unwearied watchfulneſs to Prayer, which our Lord ſo much exhorted to, and the Apoſtles ſo ſolicitouſly preſſe the Saints every-where to be found in, as of abſolute neceſſity. What

elſe means thoſe Promiſes of Reward in the *Revelations*, to thoſe who ſhould overcome, and hold out to the end, but to ingage them to a conſtant Perſeverance? Or what needed it, if 'twere impoſſible for them to fall ſhort; whom we ſuppoſe none will deny to have been in a ſtate of Grace?

Rev. 2. 5. & 3. 16. And the Church of *Epheſus* was threatned to have their Candleſtick removed, if they repented not, and did their firſt works; and that of *Laodicea*, to be ſpewed out of his Mouth. Who can ſay thoſe fooliſh Virgins in the Parable were not once in a ſtate of Grace, whoſe Lamps were once lighted and burning, as well as trimm'd, or elſe they could not properly be ſaid

Mat. 25. 8. to be gone out. Or that thoſe were not called by Saving Grace, in whoſe Hearts the Heavenly Seed ſprung up,

Luke 8. 7, 8, 14, 15. and for a time proſper'd, 'till the Bryars and Thorns, the over-care and concern about the things of this Life, choak'd it; 'twas not, that they had no day of Viſitation from God, wherein they might have wrought out their Salvation, had they continued to make the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteouſneſs, their firſt and chiefeſt Choice,

Choice, and placed their Treaſure there, and diſintangled themſelves from thoſe unneceſſary Cares; the Seed that was ſown and ſprung up, was the very ſame with that, which in the honeſt Heart brought forth Fruit abundantly.

Surely *Paul* that Great Apoſtle was not of theſe Mens Opinion, when after he had long laboured in the Goſpel, takes care to keep under his Body, leaſt while he Preach'd to others, he himſelf ſhould be a Caſt-away; whom yet we doubt not, but they will grant was then effectually called, and in a ſtate of Grace. And the Author to the *Hebrews* writing in the Third Chapter, to thoſe he calls holy Brethren, and Partakers of the Heavenly Calling, Verſe the 12th, exhorts them to take heed, leſt there was in any of them an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the Living God. And again, Chap. 4. 1. *Let us therefore fear, leſt a promiſe being left us of entring his reſt*, (ſurely then not eternally reprobated) *any of you ſhould ſeem to come ſhort of it.* Verſe 11. *Let us labour therefore to enter that reſt, leſt any Man fall after the ſame example of Unbelief.* 1 Cor. 9. 27.

belief. Again, *Chap. 6. Verſe* 4, 5, 6, ſpeaking of thoſe who had been enlightned, and had taſted of the Heavenly Gift, and were made Partakers of the Holy Ghoſt, and that had taſted the good Word of God, and the Powers of the World to come, (ſhrewd ſigns that they were effectually call'd, and in a State of Grace) that if they ſhould fall away, 'twould be impoſſible to renew them again to Repentance; not becauſe they were eternally reprobated, but becauſe they Crucified to themſelves the Son of God afreſh, becauſe they grieved his good Spirit, and rejected the Means. Hath not the Lord
Ezek. 18. 24, 26. and c. 33. v. 18. ſaid, If a Righteous Man turns from his Righteouſneſs, he ſhall die: Who can be Righteous without the aſſiſtance of God's Grace? No Man can make himſelf ſo; 'tis not in Man to direct his own Ways; and yet it ſeems 'tis poſſible for him to fall from it, after he hath lived ſo long under its conduct, as by it to be made Righteous; and one would think, ſhould then be ſanctified too. Our Saviour ſaith of
John 15. 1, 2, 5, 6. himſelf, *I am the true Vine, ye are the Branches; my Father is the Husbandman, every Branch in me that beareth*

not

not Fruit, he taketh away. Again, *If a Man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered.* Surely those who are Branches in Christ, while so, are accepted of the Father; and yet it seems 'tis possible for them to fall away, and be cut off as wither'd Branches; whence he often repeats this Condition, if ye abide in me; and presently he saith, the way to continue in his Love, was to do his Will, as he had that of his Father's, and continued in his Love. But though we can't embrace their Opinion, for their Reasons, and as they state it; but own that 'tis possible for People to make a considerable Progress in Grace, and yet for want of a careful and constant Watchfulness to that Grace, they may fall away: Yet we believe such a State and Growth in Grace, through a vigilant Attention thereto, and such a degree of Faith attainable, as that there is no more going forth. Joh. 15. 10.

Though we speak of God's tendring, and Man's accepting or rejecting the Offers of his Love, yet far be it from us to assert, that fallen Man in his own Natural Estate, can of himself

think a good Thought, much leſs will a good Deed, or in his own power convert his own depraved Will to God, any more than the Needle can turn and direct it ſelf towards the Pole, without being impregnated by the Loadſtone. For though *Adam's* Fall introduced no ſuch real change in the Faculties of Man's Soul, as to ſubvert their natural order, and ſo deſtroy the natural liberty and freedom of his Will, but that what he wills, he wills freely, and not by conſtraint; yet foraſmuch as he died from that Divine Life to which he was united, and thence derived power and ability to will and do that which was good, he became thenceforth utterly incapable ſo to do as of himſelf, otherwiſe than as he is influenced by, and aſſents, and yields to the drawings of that Divine Grace, which God in his great Love hath liberally beſtowed on Mankind, both to illuminate their Underſtandings, and alſo incline their Wills: Which is both ſufficient, and freely offers to reclaim Man, and convert his Will, and finally unite his Mind to it ſelf, and therein reſtore to him the power of willing and doing good,

which

which Man never had, nor never can have, but in conjunction with this pure principle of Divine Light and Life; but he may, and is most inclinable to slight its Offers, and resist its Endeavours, and while so, can't experience that power and vertue that is found in it, where it freely exerts it self. So that as it must be acknowledged, that Man acts as a free Agent, and as having an Elective Power, and that God in his various Dispensations treats him as such; yet is this Gift of God the first mover in all his motions towards that which is truly good and acceptable to him; which is always so near and ready to help and assist a Man, (while it continues to strive with him) that probably none that neglect its assistance, and do evil, but upon reflection, plainly perceive they may do otherwise. Whence 'tis clear, Man's destruction is of himself, and his only sufficiency and help is in God; who never requires any Duty of him, but he furnishes him with a suitable power to perform it, would he but regard and close with it.

But that which seems to be our capital Error, and the top of all their Charge,

Charge, and that which is to silence all Plea's in our behalf, is our omitting the use of the Ordinances (so called) of Baptism, and Bread and Wine. *John* indeed as the next immediate Forerunner of Christ to prepare his Way, gave an Alarm to the *Jews*, that were so secure under the Law of *Moses*, and proclaim'd the Kingdom of Heaven at hand; and the time come wherein God commanded the *Jews*, as well as others, every where to Repent; 'twas not sufficient for them to go on in sinning, and then offer those respective Sacrifices which the Law enjoyn'd them for the same; but now the Wrath of God was near to be reveal'd from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men; 'twas not sufficient to deck and make clean the outside of the Cup and Platter, but the inside was to be cleansed, and then the outside would be clean also. The Axe was now laid to the Root, and every Tree that brought not forth good Fruit, was to be hewn down. The Law of *Moses* took hold on exterior Acts, and could not make perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience; but now that Dispensation was about to be

Mat. 3. 2. Act. 17. 30.

Ro. 1. 18.

Mat. 23. 25, 26.

Mat. 3. 10.

Heb. 9. 9. 2 Cor. 10. 5.

established

tabliſhed that comes nearer home, and takes cognizance of the very Thoughts, that Sin be not ſo much as conceived in the Wills joyning thereto. Wherefore *John* was ſent to adminiſter the Baptiſm of Repentance, as a lively figure of that which was preſently after to follow; for *John*'s Baptiſm was not capable to produce this Effect upon the Mind: And he himſelf teſtifies, *That though he baptized them with Water, yet he that came after him, that was before him, and more honourable than he, ſhould baptize them with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Fire; that his Fan was in his Hand, and that 'twas he ſhould throughly purge his floor.* Which is the great Work that is to be done under this Goſpel-diſpenſation, to take away the Sins of the World, and deſtroy the Works of the Devil, to purifie Peoples Hearts, and make them ſpiritually minded; this is the proper effect of Chriſt's laſting Baptiſm; not the waſhing away of the Filth of the Fleſh, but the anſwer of a good Conſcience towards God, to purge our Conſciences from dead Works, to ſerve the Living God in Newneſs of Life. The Baptiſm of Chriſt is but one, and

James 1. 15.

Mat. 3. 11, 12.

1 Joh. 3. 8.

1 Pet. 3. 21.

Eph. 4. 5.

thoſe

Ro. 6. 3. 6,7,8,11. those who by it are Baptized into Jesus Christ, are Baptized into his Death, and their Old Man Crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, and they no longer serve Sin; because they that are dead with Christ, are freed from Sin, and made alive to God, to live a Holy Righteous Life. These are the blessed Effects of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost and Fire, and Benefits that redound to those who are in truth washed by Christ in that holy Laver which entitles us to a part in him; 'tis our chiefest Concern to know this inward spiritual Baptism of Christ, that our Hearts may be Washed, Purified and Sanctified by the Spirit of God; and that we really put on Christ, and are in him, who is the Substance, in whom the Types ended. *John* knew and foretold himself, that he must decrease, but Christ must encrease; he doth not say, I shall cease presently at once, so soon as Christ's Baptism takes place; but I must decrease; but were Water-Baptism to continue always amongst Christians, then would not *John* decrease: Nor will it solve this Allegation, That

1 Cor. 12. 13.

Zech. 13. 1.

1 Cor. 6. 11.

Joh. 3. 30.

'twas

twas aboliſh'd as *John*'s, and inſtituted new as Chriſt's: for then hath Chriſt his different Goſpel-Baptiſms, which is erronious.

We grant that ſome of the Apoſtles did uſe Water-Baptiſm for a time; but we believe 'twas rather in compliance with the Circumſtances of Time than of Neceſſity, and in condeſcention to the Weakneſs of Believers in the very Infancy of the Church, and even the ſame Age wherein *John* Baptized; who was not only a true Meſſenger of God in his time, but had gained great Credit among the People, and his Memory and Meſſage could not ſoon be forgotten; nor was it eaſie to draw them from a Practice, that but juſt before was acknowledged to be of Divine Authority. For we find the Apoſtles tolerated the believing *Jews* to live in certain Rites and Ceremonies of the *Moſaical* Law, notwithſtanding the *Meſſiah* was come in the Fleſh and abrogated them; ſo difficult 'tis to diſengage People from thoſe things, wherein they have been educated, and to which their Minds are once glewed; and ſome of them would have had the believing *Gentiles* come

come under that Yoak, and be Cir-
cumcised; which *Paul* their great A-
postle withstood, seeing beyond all
those things, knowing that the King-
Ro. 14. 17. dom of God was not Meats and Drink,
but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in
1 Cor. 4. 20. the Holy Ghost, and not in Word but
Power, not divers Washings, and car-
Col. 2. 14, 16, 17, 22, 10. nal Ordinances which were Shadows
and to perish; but the Body is of
Heb. 9. 9, 10. Christ, and those that are in him, are
in him compleat; believing that if
Gal. 5. 2. they were Circumcised, Christ should
profit them nothing; and yet we see
such was his Condescention, that he
himself notwithstanding, Circumcised
Timothy; and when he was at *Jerusa-*
Act. 21. 20, to the 28. *lem*, shaved his Head, *&c.* behaving
himself as a *Jew*, for the sakes of
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had delivered them from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; 'tis this that is of abſolute Neceſſity to our Salvation; he did not then Baptize becauſe ſome others did it, which yet is as large a Commiſſion, as perhaps any pretend to now-a-days. Of which we ſay as he did of Circumciſion, (though we don't grant 'tis the Seal of the Covenant, and introduced in room of Circumciſion, as ſome will have it, but without Scripture-authority,) neither Baptiſm nor no Baptiſm availeth any thing ſhort of a New Creature; which is the trueſt Sign of poſſeſſing the inward Spiritual Grace, and of being in Chriſt; and is beyond all viſible Signs whatſoever.

The Apoſtles having thus indulged it, 'tis no wonder that 'twas continued, and ſince got footing under the Degeneracy; for as Corruption entred the Church, and was encreaſed, the Spirit and Life of Chriſtianity was more and more eclipſed, and the Minds of its Profeſſors grew darker; and then adhered more to external Performances; and not only continued that, which had been uſed by their

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come under that Yoak, and be Circumcised; which *Paul* their great Apostle withstood, seeing beyond all those things, knowing that the Kingdom of God was not Meats and Drinks, but Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and not in Word but Power, not divers Washings, and carnal Ordinances which were Shadows, and to perish; but the Body is of Christ, and those that are in him, are in him compleat; believing that if they were Circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing; and yet we see such was his Condescention, that he himself notwithstanding, Circumcised *Timothy*; and when he was at *Jerusalem*, shaved his Head, *&c.* behaving himself as a *Jew*, for the sakes of those who saw not so far as himself. And notwithstanding he was such a laborious and zealous Publisher of the Gospel, yet we find he Baptized but very few, and thanks God that he Baptized no more, (surely 'twas not then essential to the Gospel,) but saith plainly, That he was not sent to Baptize, but to Preach the Gospel; to turn People from Darkness to Light, from the Power of Satan to God, who had

Ro. 14. 17.
1 Cor. 4. 20.
Col. 2. 14, 16, 17, 22, 10.
Heb. 9. 9, 10.
Gal. 5. 2.
Act. 21. 20, to the 28.
1 Cor. 1. 14.
1 Cor. 1. 17.
Col. 1. 13.

had delivered them from the Power of Darkneſs, and tranſlated them into the Kingdom of his dear Son; 'tis this that is of abſolute Neceſſity to our Salvation; he did not then Baptize becauſe ſome others did it, which yet is as large a Commiſſion, as perhaps any pretend to now-a-days. Of which we ſay as he did of Circumciſion, (though we don't grant 'tis the Seal of the Covenant, and introduced in room of Circumciſion, as ſome will have it, but without Scripture-authority,) neither Baptiſm nor no Baptiſm availeth any thing ſhort of a New Creature; which is the trueſt Sign of poſſeſſing the inward Spiritual Grace, and of being in Chriſt; and is beyond all viſible Signs whatſoever.

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Predeceſſors, or at leaſt ſomething
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began to trim and deck that Rel
gion, that in it ſelf was plain, ſimpl
and homely, and conſiſted more i
Power and Divine Love, than ou
ward Obſervations: Which in pro
ceſs of time was ſo dreſt and garniſh
ed, that its Auguſt Splendour becam
inviting to others. Under this De
generacy in degree ſprung up Infant
Baptiſm; a meer Humane Invention
without any Scripture-authority, ei
ther by Precept or Practice; where
fore for thoſe who don't uſe Bap
tiſm, as 'twas inſtituted under its pro
per Diſpenſation, to upbraid us fo
neglecting it, is abſurd and unreaſo
nable.

Bread Wine,

But that which makes the loudeſt
Out-cry of all, is our Diſ-uſe of the
Sacrament, ſo called, of Bread and
Wine; 'tis this is that peſtilent mor
tal Error that in our Oppoſer's Ac
count, renders us worſe than the Pa
piſts, whatever 'tis that makes us the
Spawn of the Jeſuites; which with
ſeveral others, are Epithets, that to
be ſure were calculated (tho' unjuſtly)
to

render us as odious as may be to
e People, and carry a great deal of
ancour in them, and savour of too
uch Gall, to proceed from the meek
pirit of Christianity, that teacheth
o be at Peace with, and have Chari- 2 Tim.
y for all that call on the Lord out 2. 22.
f a pure Heart. But whether upon
he whole Matter, we deserve this se-
ere bitter Censure; or whether those
hat so liberally bestow it upon us,
ave a just right to cast the first Stone,
what we desire our sober Neigh-
ours to consider, and not judge us
lso meerly from an implicit Belief of
hat others say of us. We are not
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Predeceſſors, or at leaſt ſomething in its ſtead; but by degrees added more Rites and Ceremonies; and at length began to trim and deck that Religion, that in it ſelf was plain, ſimple and homely, and conſiſted more in Power and Divine Love, than outward Obſervations: Which in proceſs of time was ſo dreſt and garniſhed, that its Auguſt Splendour became inviting to others. Under this Degeneracy in degree ſprung up Infant Baptiſm; a meer Humane Invention without any Scripture-authority, either by Precept or Practice; wherefore for thoſe who don't uſe Baptiſm, as 'twas inſtituted under its proper Diſpenſation, to upbraid us for neglecting it, is abſurd and unreaſonable.

Bread Wine,

But that which makes the loudeſt Out-cry of all, is our Diſ-uſe of the Sacrament, ſo called, of Bread and Wine; 'tis this is that peſtilent mortal Error that in our Oppoſer's Account, renders us worſe than the Papiſts, whatever 'tis that makes us the Spawn of the Jeſuites; which with ſeveral others, are Epithets, that to be ſure were calculated (tho' unjuſtly)

to

to render us as odious as may be to the People, and carry a great deal of Rancour in them, and savour of too much Gall, to proceed from the meek Spirit of Christianity, that teacheth to be at Peace with, and have Charity for all that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart. But whether upon the whole Matter, we deserve this severe bitter Censure; or whether those that so liberally bestow it upon us, have a just right to cast the first Stone, is what we desire our sober Neighbours to consider, and not judge us also meerly from an implicit Belief of what others say of us. We are not ignorant of the great Noise and Stir there hath been about this in *Christendom*, to the scandalizing Christianity among both *Jews* and *Turks*: The Papists have improv'd it to downright Idolatry, affirming 'tis the real Body and Blood, and as such adore it; (one would think 'twere better let alone:) Others, that Christ is in it, though they know not how: One saith 'tis this, another 'tis that; while they all seem to expect that from it, which it doth not necessarily administer; for want of distinguishing between that

2 Tim. 2. 22.

Joh. 6. 51, 56. Bread of Life that came down fro Heaven,(that Fleſh and Blood of Chri that giveth Life to all that fe thereon, by which they dwell in hi and he in them;) and that Supp which was eaten by the Primitive Chri ſtians, in Commemoration of his Deat and Sacrifice; which are not ſo con next, as that the one, neceſſarily in cludes the other, as Experience abun dantly teſtifies; would People but b true to themſelves herein: how man are there that receive this from Ye to Year, who yet complain all the Lives of Deadneſs, Dryneſs and Lea neſs of Soul, and want of Power; no receiving that renewing of Life, an Spiritual Strength that is propoſed i it, and ſo but an empty Shadow in deed: For how can they in truth ex pect to feed on Chriſt Spiritually i their Hearts, who will not admit th he really dwells in his Saints, but ſteem it an Error in thoſe that do However, we believe all People ough to be well perſwaded in their ow Minds, and ſeriouſly conſiderate in thi and other Religious Practiſes; and no take up things meerly traditionally be cauſe others do it; nor ought they t

Joh. 14. 20, 21, 23.

b

be vehemently preſt to or againſt things not abſolutely eſſential to Salvation, in which their Underſtandings are not clear: Nor ſhould any be ſcoft or reproacht for thoſe things which to them are Matter of Conſcience, (and therefore ſacred; though to others it may appear of leſs moment) a Practice that is a great Shame among People profeſſing Chriſtianity. Nor do we judge and condemn thoſe that are found in the Practice either of this or Water-Baptiſm, as 'twas primitively uſed; whoſe Sober, Chriſtian, Circumſpect Lives, witneſſeth to their ſincere Intentions herein, who may be conſciouſly tender in it, and fearful to omit it, till they are otherwiſe fully perſwaded: But for us, to whom the barrenneſs and emptineſs of theſe outward viſible Things are manifeſt, we cannot continue therein; they yielding no true Soul-ſatisfaction, nor adminiſtring any inward Spiritual Grace to us. Where- 1 Pet. 2. 2, 3.
fore having taſted that the Lord is good and gracious, we wait for the ſincere Milk of that Word, by which we have been begotten to God, that we may receive ſtrength thereby, and grow 2 Pet. 3. 18.
in Grace, and the Knowledge of our

Lord Jesus Christ, and a greater Ac
quaintance with that true inward Spiri
tual Communion and Fellowship wit
him, wherein he sups with his Saints
Rev. 3.20. and they with him, and receive Life
by him, who dwells in them, and the
in him; as the Members are joyned t
Eph. 5.30. the Head, and partake of its Life, an
Joh. 15.5. live by it; or the Branches to th
Vine, which receive Life, Vertue an
Nourishment from him, whereby Frui
is brought forth to the glory of God
and well-pleasing to him. 'Tis not suf
ficient that we participate hereof onc
a Month or Quarter, but as the Jew
Exod. 16. 21. had their Manna, fresh every Morning
so ought we to receive a daily Supply
and renewing of Strength in our in
ward Man, by eating that Heavenl
Bread, that nourisheth up to Eterna
Life, and drinking plentifully of tha
Joh. 4.14. Well of Living-Water, which in th
Saints springs up to Life Eternal; fo
as in God we live, move, and have ou
very being; so is Christ the true an
proper Life of the inward Man, b
which it truly lives to God, nor ca
it live but by him. Those that are be
gotten to God by the Word of Life
and are born again of the Spirit, ar
priviledged

prlvileged thus to feed on Chriſt, and enjoy him; which none can do that are not firſt quickened and made alive by him; none can receive Life, Sap and Vertue from him as Head and Vine, that are not firſt joyned to him as Members and Branches of him; nor is it ſufficient to make People Members of Chriſt, and give them admittance to feed on him, in that they were ſprinkled when Infants, *&c.* as we have already expreſs'd, though they ſhould eat Bread, and drink Wine all their Days.

Since then we no leſs enjoy the Subſtance without the Sign, why may we not omit it, as either being but temporary, or not of abſolute neceſſity; as well as our Oppoſers do that which was inſtituted (to uſe their own term) at the ſame time, and with as great ſolemnity, and greater formality, and was no leſs poſitively commanded under the ſame pretence? Why may not the ſame Authority abſolve us from the uſe of this, and exempt us from being chargeable with the breach of a Command of Chriſt, as diſcharge them from waſhing one anothers Feet, and ſecure them from the like cenſure? As alſo Jo. 13. 4, 5, 8, 14, 15.

Acts 15. 20, 29. also that of the Apoſtles, concerning things ſtrangled and Blood; and that
Jam. 5. 14, 15. of *James*, anointing the Sick with Oil? Why ſhould they be thus partial? Have we not good reaſon to conclude, that if theſe had not been long ſince laid down, they would have cleav'd as cloſe to them; and that had thoſe of Baptiſm, and Bread and Wine been then diſcontinued alſo, they would be now as eaſie under its omiſſion? For Tradition, Cuſtom and Education, makes greater impreſſions on Mens Minds, than perhaps every one may be ſenſible of; nor is it an eaſie task at firſt, to move them from thoſe things to which they have been faſtned by it. Would but People wholly relinquiſh theſe Prejudices, and conſider it impartially; 'tis probable there may appear no ſuch real difference, as juſtly to omit the one, and yet with equal reaſon to continue the other; ſince 'tis not that Bread that gives Life to the Soul, nor doth neceſſarily include it; but that Chriſt may be and is received, and fed on without it. Nor that thoſe can be thought to forget his Death and Sacri-
Tit. 2. 14. fice, who ſenſibly partake of the Benefits thereof, and purſue its Ends; who

are

re taught and assisted by him to live Gal. 1.4.
a Godly Righteous Life, and bear about in them the Marks of the Dying of our Lord Jesus; who died for all, Mat. 1.21. that those who live, should no longer 2 Cor. live to themselves, fulfilling the De- 5. 15. sires of their Minds, but to him that died for them; that through the power Phil. 3. 10. of his Resurrection they may mortifie the Deeds of the Flesh, and have Fellowship with his Sufferings, in whom his Life is made manifest. Neither can those who acknowledge his Death and Sacrifice, and partake from time to time of this Bread and Wine in memory of it, and yet are not by him redeemed from a vain Conversation, and made conformable to his Death, and so feed on him, as to participate of that Life that comes by him, in any wise escape Damnation, let their Pretensions be what they will.

Since then God hath repleniſh'd our Hearts with his Grace, and hath not with-held his Heavenly Manna from us, but daily owns us by his comfortable Presence, to our great satisfaction, under the Omission of these things; supplying our Wants and Necessities, as we have recourse unto him, in

that which ever hath access unto him, having our continual Dependancy on him who enables and strengthens those of us * that retain our Primitive Sincerity and Integrity, to lead a Sober, Pious, Christian Life, as becomes the Gospel of Christ, which is the certain Product of Spiritual Grace; and forasmuch as our Opposers acknowledge it to be but an outward visible Sign, and dare not say that the inward Spiritual Grace is tied to it, nor that 'tis of absolute necessity to Salvation; with what Reason do they Unchristian us, and so load us with Calumnies and Accusations on this Account; using it as an Instance to blacken us, and condemn in gross our whole Christian Profession, principally from hence; as though 'twere the chief thing that constitutes a Christian, and entitles him to the Benefits that come by Christ.

* For we intend not to Apologize for those who tho' they may be call'd by our Name, yet live loosly and walk disorderly, and are Blemishes and a Grief to us; which yet ought to be imputed to their Insincerity or Unwatchfulness, and not to the Insufficiency of the Principle they pretend to.

What shall we think then of perhaps more than Two parts in Three of their own Assembly, who no more practice this than do we, and yet are many of them

them as ſober People, and if we may know (as Chriſt directs us,) by their Fruits, are doubtleſs as near the Kingdom, and no leſs in a State of Grace, than are thoſe who ſo exult in, and value themſelves upon this Performance; which however it may bound and diſtinguiſh particular Societies and Communions, 'tis certain no Obſervations nor Performances ſhort of being ruled and governed by the Spirit of Chriſt, as Head, can entitle us to a Memberſhip in him; we may make a ſpecious ſhew, and carry a Syſtem of Divinity in our Heads; but if he rules not our Hearts, we are none of his. 'Twere well they were as thoughtful to fulfil all Righteouſneſs in every reſpect, and as zealouſly careful and concern'd to obſerve and punctually perform all the Commands and Injunctions to which the Chriſtian Religion obligeth them, and to qualify themſelves to be rightful Inheritors of thoſe Bleſſings and Promiſes pronounced by our Saviour, as they tenaciouſly adhere to this; as though 'twere indeed the Sum both of Mens Duty and Enjoyments, and that their Salvation turned upon this very Pin; which yet People may perform

form, while their Wills are unsubdued, and Lusts unmortified. But we find that Men have been apt enough to be busily employed about Mint, Annis, and Cummin, whilst they neglect the weightier Matters, to run into, and cry up, and maintain those exterior parts of Religion, that are reconcilable to an Unconverted State.

If the Professors of Christianity were less taken up about Signs and Shadows, and nice and unnecessary Scrutinies and Distinctions, wherewith they perplex it, and more devoted to observe the weighty, important, and indispensable Precepts of Christ, and demonstrate the Power that Christianity hath over their Minds, by affording signal Instances of their being his true Disciples, and rightful Heirs of his Kingdom, being in measure invested with his Divine Vertues and Graces; we should have less Envy, Variance, Back-biting, and Detraction, which weaken the common Interest and Piety, and give our common Enemy an advantage; and more Christian Love, Peace, Concord and good Neighbourhood amongst us. If all that mean well, did but pursue Vertue,

love

love it, and encourage it, wherever it appears; and hate Vice and Evil in all, and discountenance it every where; and make these the Measures of their Christian Charity, rather than Parallel Opinions in lesser Matters, 'twould bring us nearer together, and more advance True Piety, than all their contending about different Apprehensions in things far less essential. God, who regards not Names, but Natures, knows among all Nations and People who are his; and the Rule he left us to know also, was their Fruits, their Actions being the exertion of their Wills; all Mankind are either under the Power and Conduct of the Spirit of God, or else of the Devil; all are either Carnal or Spiritual-minded; and as is the spring and bent of their Desires and Affections, so is their Actions; each Birth have their proper Products, which are contrary to each other. So that let what Notions or Opinions soever possess Mens Heads, they live according to that Spirit and Principle that governs their Hearts. We cannot gather Grapes of Thorns, nor Figs of Thistles; no Fountain sends forth bit-

Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. ter Water and ſweet at the ſame time? 'Tis an Evangelical Truth, Thoſe that live in Envy and Strife, and bring forth the Fruits of the Fleſh, are of their Father the Devil; and thoſe who by the Spirit, mortifie thoſe corrupt Luſts and Affections, and bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, adorning the Doctrin of God our Saviour, by a Sober, Godly, Righteous Life, are of God; for herein the Children of God are manifeſt from the Children of the Devil.

Eph. 5. 9.

1 Joh. 3. 10.

Thus have we candidly, though briefly, expreſt our real Opinion and Belief in thoſe Points, in which we apprehend our Adverſaries have endeavour'd moſt to expoſe us; which we hope may prove ſatisfactory to thoſe, who are not reſolved to think ill of us: But to ſpeak fully to every critical, trifling Objection, were a tedious Task, as well as vaſtly beyond the Extent of our Deſign. We requeſt our ſerious Neighbours to hear and ſee for themſelves, and not take things upon truſt from others, and judging the things they know not, condemn us by hear-ſay. Don't be impoſed

poſed upon, by thoſe whoſe peeviſh Humours would have all do like themſelves; who either look not at all, or but very coyly into the Books of thoſe, they have taken a Pet againſt, whoſe Perſwaſion in ſome things differs from what they have pronounced Orthodox; as tho' Truth were their peculiar incloſure; which yet certainly argues either a great deal of Prejudice, or a feeble and fleeting Judgment, that dares not truſt it ſelf. Were our Books ſtuft with ſuch palpable Errors as is ſuggeſted, ſurely 'twere not ſo dangerous Reading them: Who fears to read the Alchoran? But on the contrary, 'tis a ſtrong indication that they contain much truth; for as 'tis the proper Object of the Underſtanding; ſo where it appears with a clear Evidence, anſwering to Peoples own Experience, 'tis very forcible and prevalent upon the Minds of thoſe who diligently ſeek it for love of it, and willingly depoſit all pre-ingagements of Mind in its diſquiſition. Be then ſo juſt to us, and kind to your ſelves, as to relinquiſh all Prejudice and Prepoſſeſſions, and impartially examine the truth of theſe things; ſearch the Sacred

Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. ter Water and ſweet at the ſame time? 'Tis an Evangelical Truth, Thoſe that live in Envy and Strife, and bring forth the Fruits of the Fleſh, are of their Father the Devil; and thoſe who by the Spirit, mortifie thoſe corrupt Luſts and Affections, and bring forth the Fruits of the Spirit, adorning the Doctrin of God our Saviour, by a Sober, Godly, Righteous Life, are of God; for herein the Children of God are manifeſt from the Children of the Devil.

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cred Scriptures diligently, with an inclination rather to find and embrace Truth, than to ſupport a received Opinion; try whether 'tis ſo or not, comparing it with your own Experiences, and the Witneſs of God in your own Hearts. Though our Belief in ſome of theſe Particulars don't exactly quadrate to that of our Oppoſers, it don't therefore neceſſarily follow, 'tis not agreeable to Truth and Scripture: Nor can they give us any infallible aſſurance, that their Conceptions are a true Standard of Truth, notwithſtanding they vend their Apprehenſions as the only Orthodox; yes, and are diſpleaſed too with thoſe that can't be determined by them.

We have no Deſign carrying on behind the Curtain, howſoever our Sober Demeanour may be uncharitably (not to ſay maliciouſly) inſinuated as only a Cover of Sheeps Cloathing upon the Wolves Nature; and our moſt Solemn Declaration of our Belief in ſeveral Religious Points (being undeniable Truths,) conſtrued, and ſuggeſted by ſome Men as only a fair Cover wherewith we guild over our Poyſon, that it may paſs the leſs ſuſpected,

ected, and be the more glibly swallowed. What think you, is not this the heighth of Prejudice, and Envy in the abstract? Would they themselves be content to be thus interpreted? We have no intent to decoy and trapan People, that we should walk under a Disguise; which Intreagues usually have interest at one end of them, which can't be our case, who neither give nor take Money for Preaching? so that the increase of our Numbers won't fill our Coffers. We have no other Interest to promote, but the Advancement of True Piety and Christianity: And having Love and Good-will to all People, more especially to those whose Minds are awakened, and Hearts warmed, having true fervent Desires, and living Breathings towards God, thirsting after a nearer and more satisfactory knowledge of, and acquaintance with him, than barely a profession and hear-say of him; and therefore what we have found advantageous, assistant and satisfactory to us, in our unwearied pursuit after Peace with him, that we recommend to others. We call People home to the Gift of God in themselves, which only can do them

them good; that every one may know the good Shepherd and Bishop of Souls for themselves, and hear and know his Voice in them, from that of a Stranger, and learn of him, and follow him, who is pure, and ever leads to Purity and Holiness; that so his offering up of himself for them, may be of benefit to them, and they experience the great Salvation of God. For impress this upon your Minds, and take it along with you; That notwithstanding our Saviour hath paid a Ransom for us, and made an Atonement through the precious Blood of his Cross; yet if we experience not the end of his Coming, and Death effected, and answered in our selves, it shall avail us nothing; except we know him a Saviour and Supporter near; except we know a Principle of Divine Light and Life, to illuminate our Minds, to revive and warm our languishing Hearts, to beget and increase true Love to God, and the living Faith that gives Victory, to convert us, and govern our Thoughts, to renew and regulate our Wills, and limit our Desires, and bridle our Tongues, to excite holy Inclinations, and keep up a

due

due Heat in our Chriſtianity, and ſtrengthen our Minds in that which is good and well-pleaſing to God: Except we know theſe things in and for our ſelves, all our outſide ſhew of Religion is but vain, and our profeſſion of Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing; but we ſhall lye down in ſorrow at laſt. For none are Chriſt's, but thoſe that have his Spirit, and are influenced by it; nor are any Children of God, but thoſe that are led by the Spirit of God; which begets in the Mind a deteſtation of Sin and Evil, and a love to Purity, Goodneſs and Vertue. Wherefore, laying aſide all Strife and Animoſities, all Envying and Evil-ſpeaking, let us abhor that which is Evil, and cleave to that which is Good, and addreſs our ſelves with a due and humble Application to the accompliſhment of that moſt concerning and important Affair of our Lives, the working out our Salvation. And let every one follow the Lord faithfully, according to what is made known to them; knowing that we ſhall be judged according to our Knowledge, and that 'twill be happy for thoſe whoſe Wills and Performances correſpond with

Ro. 8. 9, 14.

Ro. 12. 9.

their Underſtandings, in that Day when all muſt ſtand before the Judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and give an Account of their Deeds done in the Body, and receive a Sentence thereafter, either, *Come ye bleſſed*, or *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity.* It won't be then of what Congregation or Confeſſion of Faith, or of what Perſwaſion amongſt the many waſt thou: Among all which there will then be but Two ſorts, the Sheep and the Goats; thoſe that heard the Shepherd's Voice, and followed him, who were guided and governed by the good Spirit of God in their Hearts; and thoſe who wrapping their Talent in a Napkin, ſtifled Convictions, and neglecting the Day of their Viſitation, continued under the dark Power of the Evil One. One may go a great way, and make a fair ſhew of Religion and Piety, and yet be turned to the left Hand; 'tis not having our Heads filled with curious ſublime Notions, though of never ſo fine and elevated a Speculation; let's trim and garniſh our Lamps never ſo finely, 'twill not adminiſter an entrance without the Heavenly Oil, without that Holy Divine Unction fills our Hearts,

Hearts, enlightens our Minds, and inflames our Affections to a due Watchfulneſs and Obedience to its Teachings; which are the moſt aſſured Marks of our being really in Chriſt, in whom only our acceptance is.

That you with us, and we with you, may ſo circumſpectly live up to our Light and Knowledge given by Chriſt, as that our Conſciences may not condemn us; but that, having finiſhed our Days here with comfort, we may lay down our Heads in Peace, with a well-grounded Hope of a Joyful Reſurrection, and have Boldneſs in the Day of Judgment; is our Hearty Deſire.

For howſoever People may have been poſſeſt with the contrary, by thoſe who probably have left nothing unattempted, which their invention could ſupply, to fix an Odium, and ſcare People from us, we believe the Reſurrection as delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures; and our Adverſaries can't reaſonably pretend to know more; in which we willingly acquieſs; content that Faith ſupply the defect of Demonſtration; eſteeming it conſentaneous to Reaſon, to forbear even the

moſt abſtracted reaſoning about that which is above Reaſon. We doubt not in the leaſt either the reality or excellency of it; but our great care, and neceſſary concern is, that if by any means we may attain to the Reſurrection of the Juſt; and then 'tis ſufficient that when our Lord appears, we
1 Joh. 3. 2, ſhall be like him: Which hope and
3. expectation ought to excite in all, moſt fervent Deſires, and vigorous Purſuits after Purity and Holineſs.

If what we have Written for your Information, may find ſome place with thoſe, who being impartial, and inquiring, have room to receive it, and that it contributes to their Benefit and Satisfaction, we have our End: But for thoſe who are full, or are Critical, and ready to Carpe at every Word or Sentence that is not plac'd to their Mind, if not alſo pre-judge it, as 'tis not intended for them; ſo we don't ſuppoſe 'twill prove to their good Liking, nor meet with a Reception amongſt them. For we don't propoſe to reconcile our whole Belief and Perſwaſion in Religious Matters to that of our Oppoſers; who notwithſtanding, what

what we have writ, we expect will yet accuse us of Error. However, having thus far declar'd our selves in the most necessary Points of the Christian Religion, we don't think our selves farther obliged to answer the Cavils and Criticisms of such who may appear Contentious, and will never want something to object against those that comes not up in all things exactly to their Level. Whom yet we advise, rather to be quiet, and study to know and govern themselves, according to that Religion that is Pure and Undefiled before God, and leads to Visit and Jam. 1.27. Assist the Fatherless and Widows in their Affliction, and to keep themselves from the Spots and Defilements of this World. Were this (as it ought) our Principal Care and Concern in our Conduct, we should have little mind or leisure to differ about Matters of less moment: And while we seem zealously to contend about Religion, frustrate its end. We should not be taken up in disputing what that Principle is, which God hath plac'd in us to do us good, and in mean time neglect its Assistance, and obstruct its Operation upon the Mind; but be given up

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to be leavened and changed by it, th
we may partake of the Bleſſings ther
1 Cor. 3. 11, 12, 13, 14. of; and with it build on the Founda
tion which God hath laid, that whic
may abide the fiery Tryal. To whic
we recommend you, and remain you
peaceable and loving Neighbours,

W. C. A. P. J. H, &c.

THE END.

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